

REMARKS

Upon entry of this amendment, Claims 1, 16, and 20 will have been amended herein. The amendments to Claims 1, 16 and 20 do not introduce new matter. Claims 1 to 24 remain pending.

35 U.S.C. 103(a) Rejection

Claims 1-24 have been finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being anticipated by JP 09-152569 to Masayoshi (hereinafter "Masayoshi") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,034,524 to Barringer (hereinafter "Barringer"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

However, solely to expedite prosecution, Applicants have made clarifying amendments herein to make explicit that which was implicit. Namely, Claims 1, 16 and 20 have been amended to recite detection of the edge of the substrate while the substrate is supported by the stage by contacting the edge of the substrate. Support for this feature may be found, for example, at least at Figure 2 and the accompanying text of the present application.

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner acknowledges that the primary Masayoshi reference does not teach the feature of edge sensors contacting the substrate. See Final Office Action, paragraph 1. However, the Examiner asserts that Barringer cures the deficiencies of Masayoshi in that it discloses "a plurality of probes(102) [that] detect the edge of the substrate while the substrate(13) is supported by the stage (see Fig.6) by contacting the substrate." Final Office Action, paragraph 1.

The figure of Barringer that the Examiner references in the above quote (Fig. 6) clearly shows the probes (102)

facing the major surface of the substrate rather than the edge of the substrate. In fact, the probes taught by Barringer must contact the major surface in order to contact circuit elements so that "circuit measurements . . . [may] be taken."
Barringer, col. 8, line 50.

In sum, neither Masayoshi, which does not teach contacting a substrate with a probe at all, nor Barringer which only teaches using a probe to contact a major surface of a substrate, teach or suggest detecting the edge of the substrate while the substrate is supported by the stage by contacting the edge of the substrate.

It is therefore submitted that independent Claims 1, 16 and 20, and their respective dependent Claims 2-15, 19-19 and 21-24, are allowable over the references relied upon. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-24 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) is accordingly respectfully requested.

Conclusion

The Applicants believe all the pending claims are in condition for allowance, and respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the same.

The Applicants do not believe any other fees are due regarding this amendment. If any additional fees are required, however, please charge Deposit Account No. 04-1696. Applicants encourage the Examiner to telephone Applicants'

attorney to discuss the amendment should any issues remain.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven M. Santisi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steven" and last name "Santisi" being more legible than the middle initial "M.".

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